



Los Alamos National Laboratory Hexavalent Chromium Plume Fact Sheet



CAMPAIGN:

Chromium Interim Measure and Characterization

LOCATION:

Beneath Sandia and Mortandad canyons at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL)

CONTAMINANT OF CONCERN:

Hexavalent chromium

PROJECT GOAL:

Control migration of the hexavalent chromium plume and reduce the plume footprint, while investigating the final remedy

HISTORY

From 1956 to 1972, workers at a non-nuclear power plant at LANL periodically flushed hexavalent chromium-contaminated water from the cooling towers into Sandia Canyon. At the time, potassium dichromate was commonly used as a corrosion inhibitor. The water flowed down Sandia Canyon as surface water, penetrated the underlying rock layers, and in time seeped into the regional aquifer beneath Sandia and Mortandad canyons. LANL ceased releasing chromium-contaminated water in 1972.

JUNE 2021 STATUS

- Implementing the Interim Measure along the southern and eastern portions of the plume
- Assessing performance monitoring network in the eastern portion of the plume
- Evaluating final remediation strategies

BY THE NUMBERS

50 parts per billion

New Mexico chromium groundwater standard

1/4 mile

Approximate distance from the plume edge to the nearest Los Alamos County groundwater well

1 mile long x 1/2 mile wide x 100 ft. thick > 50ppb

Approximate size of the hexavalent chromium plume

0

Amount of chromium contamination in Los Alamos County drinking water wells

900 - 1,000 feet

Depth to the regional aquifer. Chromium is located within the top 100 feet of the aquifer

5 miles

Distance (as measured at the surface) of the plume from the Rio Grande

32

Number of monitoring, extraction and injection wells installed in and around the plume

